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JUNE / JULY 2020

Northwest Indiana Business Magazine

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journey to becoming CEO of The Walt Disney Co.*

Bob Chapek
CEO of The Walt Disney Co.



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10 CRISIS PLANNING



16 HEALTH CARE EXPANSION

JUNE / JULY 2020

CONTENTS

6 BUSINESS NEWS Around the Region

Learn about the people and companies making a difference at work and in their communities

10 LAW Crisis offers lessons in planning

Ability to stay nimble helps businesses make quick changes during unthinkable financial crisis

16 HEALTH CARE Healthy dose of growth

More jobs, increased demand for services behind health care sector building boom

20 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY Remote working simplified

Experts say technological advancements have eased process to be productive outside office

24 EDUCATION Higher education in transition

Regional colleges and universities focus on future of learning whether in-person or online

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28 TIME TO RECONNECT



34 OFF TO WORK HE GOES

28 MARKETING Time to reconnect

*Experts say downtime opportunity
to plan for eventual bounce back*

34 LEADERSHIP PROFILE Disney adventure of a lifetime

*Theme park visit began Hammond native's
journey to becoming CEO of The Walt Disney Co.*

36 BUSINESS PROFILE Delivering ahead of curve

*Osceola-based Dineln approaches three decades
of bringing food to clients in Elkhart area*

38 MAKING A DIFFERENCE One meal at a time

*Northwest Indiana Meals on Wheels doing part
to keep food on tables of Region's homebound*

40 VIEWPOINT Trust key to success as CEO

*Effective leaders must set positive example
for organizations and people they serve*



JUN-JUL 2020

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► Cover photo of Bob Chapek in the cockpit of the Star Wars movie franchise's Millennium Falcon courtesy of The Walt Disney Co.



GOOD BIT

173%

The growth rate in the number of telecommuting workers in the U.S. since 2005, according to the 2018 American Community Survey.

Story on page 20

IN THIS ISSUE

This edition of Northwest Indiana Business Magazine comes during a time when the world faces a challenge unlike anything in recent history. Interviews conducted for the articles throughout this edition often mention the crisis created by the COVID-19 pandemic. Our writers learned business and community leaders adapted to the situation, providing expertise to guide clients and customers through uncertain times. The health care industry adapted as did higher education. Both already had been modifying their business approaches to cater to the changing needs of students and the communities where they operate. Marketing professionals were proactive and worked with clients on ways to stay in front of their customers even when interaction was limited. Service organizations, including Meals on Wheels of Northwest Indiana, found heightened demand during the crisis but rose to the challenge as did food delivery provider DineIn. And just before the country faced the pandemic, Region native Rob Chapek took the reins of The Walt Disney Co., one of the world's most recognizable brands. *We hope you enjoy this issue!*

PICTURE PERFECT



Photo provided by Purdue University Northwest

A student walks on the campus at Purdue University Northwest. Learn more about regional changes in higher education on page 24.

QUOTE TO REMEMBER

"If you continue to communicate with your customers, you become that friend everyone wants to have."

— Michelle Andres, president of Group 7even in Valparaiso
Story on page 28

LEADER PROFILE



RAEANN TRAKAS

Who she is: Director of marketing and membership, Northwest Indiana Forum

Where's home: Porter
Education: Bachelor's degree in communications, Indiana University

Best part of NWI: Our Region has something for everyone: beautiful beaches, variety of delicious local restaurants, quick day trips ... and the friendly people.

What she's reading: "Becoming," by Michelle Obama, on Audible

Favorite music: The Grateful Dead, U2, Zac Brown Band

Favorite movie: "The Godfather," parts 1 and 2

Favorite app: Wordscapes

Favorite pastime: Traveling with my family, golf

Favorite food: Paella

AROUND THE REGION



Learn about people, companies making difference at work and in their communities

LARRY AVILA

Banking

Dana Dumezich of Schererville recently was appointed to the board of directors of **American Community Bank of Indiana**. Dumezich's professional background is in medical coding and hospital data quality and research, but since 2013, she has served as a member of the Lake County Election and Registration Board.

Teachers Credit Union appointed **Kevin Holleran** assistant vice president of information security and **Tyler Davis** as mortgage loan originator, and promoted **Teresa Dahlgren** to mortgage sales manager.

Cleveland-based **KeyBank** recently named **Nicholas Bontreger** president for its northern Indiana market. He will serve as senior executive and spokesperson in the market, as well as lead the organization's economic and community development efforts. Bontreger most recently served as regional leader, retail banking, for KeyBank's Indiana, Michigan and northwest Ohio markets and will continue serving in the role. He joined KeyBank in 1998 as a branch manager in Elkhart and has 24 years of experience in the financial services industry.

Education

Ken Iwama was selected the new chancellor of **Indiana University Northwest**. Before joining IUN, he was the founding vice president for economic development, continuing studies and government relations at the City University of New York, College of Staten Island. He takes over for William Lowe, who is stepping down from the role after serving the post for 10 years.

Purdue University Northwest named **Kenneth (Chris) Holford** its provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs. He will be PNW's chief academic officer.

Paige McNulty, former superintendent of East Chicago public schools, is the new interim emergency manager for the **Gary Community School Corp.** She replaces Peter Morikis, who was in the role almost two years.

Ivy Tech Community College appointed **Countance Anderson** vice chancellor of student success at its Valparaiso campus; **Daniela Vidal**, vice president of operations at Vidal Plastics, chancellor of its Evansville campus; and **Doneisha Posey**, vice president of diversity, equity and belonging.

Chenn Zhou, a professor of mechanical engineering who has been with **Purdue University Northwest** since

1994, will be the first to serve as the **NIPSCO Distinguished Professor of Engineering Simulation** in the College of Engineering and Sciences. The college said she was awarded the post in recognition of her scholarship and extraordinary contributions to the university. The endowed professorship was created through a partnership with the **Northern Indiana Public Service Co.**

Purdue University Northwest promoted the following faculty members: **Manghui (Michael) Tu**, professor of computer information technology; **Anne Edwards**, professor of human development and family studies; **Colette Morrow**, professor of English; **Hansung Kim**, assistant professor of mechanical engineering; **Michelle Spaulding**, assistant professor of biological sciences; **Scott Bates**, assistant professor of biological sciences; **Bir Kafle**, assistant professor of mathematics; **George Stefanek**, associate professor of computer information technology; **Matthew Hanson**, clinical assistant professor of marketing; **Dushan Nikolovski**, clinical assistant professor of entrepreneurship; **Anthony Sindone**, clinical assistant professor of finance and economic development.

Marie Lynn Miranda, the former provost of Rice University, recently



BANKING
Dana Dumezich



BANKING
Teresa Dahlgren



EDUCATION
Ken Iwama



EDUCATION
Kenneth (Chris) Holford



EDUCATION
Countance Anderson

was elected the **Charles and Jill Fischer Provost of the University of Notre Dame**.

Gabriel Said Reynolds, professor of Islamic studies and theology at the **University of Notre Dame**, recently was appointed by **Pope Francis** as consultant to the **Commission for Religious Relations with Muslims**, which is part of the **Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue**. The five-year appointment on the commission meets annually in Rome to debrief and advise on the Catholic Church's relations with Muslims.

Abiodun (Abbey) Durojaye, director of career development and employer engagement at **Ivy Tech Community College's Valparaiso** campus, was named **Indiana College Career Development Professional of the Year** by **Indiana INTERNet**.

Energy

Lloyd Yates recently was named to the board of directors for Merrillville-based **NiSource**, parent company of **NIPSCO**. Yates retired in 2019 from **Duke Energy Corp.** where he served as executive vice president, customer and delivery options and president for the company's Carolinas region.

American Municipal Power Inc.'s Board of Trustees appointed **Jolene Thompson** president and CEO. Thompson replaces **Marc Gerken**, who led the organization for almost two decades and announced his retirement in April 2019. Thompson is the first woman to lead the multi-state nonprofit corporation, which owns and operates electric facilities that provide generation, transmission and distribution of electric



EDUCATION
Doneisha Posey

power and energy to 135-member municipal electric systems in Ohio, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Virginia, Kentucky, West Virginia, Indiana, Maryland and Delaware. AMP serves 650,000 customers.

Government

Town of Plainfield Fire Chief Joel Thacker was appointed **Indiana state fire marshal**. **Thacker replaces Stephen Cox**, former **South Bend fire chief**, who in January was **named director of the Indiana Department of Homeland Security**.

Gary McKay of Munster recently was presented the **2019 Director's Community Leadership Award** by **FBI Indianapolis Assistant Special Agent in Charge Danny Youmara**. The **FBI** recognizes the achievements of individuals and organizations that make extraordinary contributions in their communities. McKay developed active-shooter defense training to prepare citizens and businesses in case of an incident in their work setting or in the community.

Indiana Family and Social Services Administration named **Greg Grostefon** of **Logansport** superintendent of **Logansport State Hospital**. Grostefon has served as interim superintendent since April 2018.

Health Care

Dr. Eric Steinberg, gastroenterologist, joined **Dr. Alexander Igonnikov** at **La Porte Physician Network — Digestive Care**, and **Dr. Anish Chopra**, gastroenterologist, joined **Porter Health Care System** and the **Porter Physician Group**.

Methodist Hospitals announced



EDUCATION
Chenn Zhou



ENERGY
Jolene Thompson

the following hires and appointments: **Nanette Farley** was named director of rehabilitation services; **Roxanne Wicklund**, was named service line director, cardiovascular services; and **Dr. Jennifer Dochee**, structural interventional cardiologist, joined the **Methodist Physician Group Network**.

Hospitality

Steven Cirulis was named senior vice president and chief financial officer and chief strategy officer of Chicago-based **Potbelly Corp.**, which operates 180 Potbelly restaurant locations around the country, including several in Indiana.

Law

Daniel Vinovich, a lawyer and partner at **Hilbrich Law Firm** in Highland, has become a **Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers**.

Logistics

Micah Vincent and **David Fagan** recently were appointed by **Gov. Eric Holcomb** to the **Ports of Indiana Commission**. Vincent is vice president of strategy and M&A at The Heritage Group in Indianapolis. Fagan is financial secretary of the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 150, which covers northern Indiana, northern Illinois and parts of southeastern Iowa. Vincent also was selected new board chairman replacing **Ken Kaczmarek**, who served the role for 15 years.

Marketing

Jay Mattern was named CEO of South Bend-based **Villing and Co.**, which provides integrated marketing communications services.



GOVERNMENT
Gary McKay

Real Estate

Jennifer Trpeski joined **Weichert, Realtors - NWI & Co.** of Valparaiso as a broker associate.

Technology

Tracy Barnes recently was appointed by **Gov. Eric Holcomb** as chief information officer for the **state of Indiana**. Barnes has served as chief of staff for Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch since 2017. Barnes earned a bachelor's degree in computer science from Butler University and a certificate from the Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth.



HEALTH CARE
Eric Steinberg



HEALTH CARE
Anish Chopra



TECHNOLOGY
Vince Miceli

Pulse Technology of Schaumburg, Ill., a technology and business services company that operates in Northwest Indiana, promoted **Vince Miceli** to vice president.

News

The **Indiana Ready Mixed Concrete Association** named the **Cline Avenue Bridge Project** its **2020 Project of the Year**. The association recognizes many concrete projects that demonstrate innovation, uniqueness, complexity and magnitude. The Cline Avenue Bridge is a 1.2-mile-long new segmental concrete

bridge connecting a fully rehabilitated, half-mile steel viaduct at the east end with the SR 912 roadway abutment on the west end. The custom concrete mix for the bridge project was formulated and provided by Smith Ready Mix in East Chicago. The Cline Avenue Bridge in East Chicago, which has been closed since 2009, is on pace to reopen in 2020, according to project representatives. The project was about half completed in early spring. The bridge project is being privately funded and has an estimated cost of \$150 million. When completed, it will reconnect SR 912 to I-90.

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CRISIS OFFERS LESSONS IN EMERGENCY P L A N N I N G

ABILITY TO STAY NIMBLE HELPS BUSINESSES MAKE QUICK CHANGES DURING UNTHINKABLE FINANCIAL CRISIS

DOUG ROSS

The COVID-19 outbreak had a major impact on everyday life in spring 2020 and put a new meaning on the saying “going viral.”

Every aspect of life was affected — from birth to death and everything in between.

Businesses had to adapt quickly to the stay-at-home orders issued by Gov. Eric Holcomb and others. Businesses, government officials and organizations took numerous precautionary measures to limit contact with the public and even encouraged or required remote learning or virtual meetings.

“It is beyond obvious that one wouldn’t have required a spotlessly clear and

reliable crystal ball to have predicted the speed and severity with which the COVID-19 pandemic would impact global financial markets and supply chains,” said Elkhart attorney Joel Duthie, a partner with Barnes & Thornburg.

The pandemic required businesses and organizations to review or consider making changes to their operations to best handle the novel coronavirus situation as well as protect employees while still trying to survive.

“If nothing else, the COVID-19 crisis is teaching us the importance of having an emergency preparedness plan,” said Trent A. McCain, a Gary attorney at McCain

Law Offices. “If you’re a restaurant, what do I do if I cannot serve patrons in person? How do I continue to pay my employees?”

Valparaiso attorney James L. Jorgensen, a partner with Hoeppner Wagner & Evans, said the COVID-19 pandemic “permeates the relationship between employers and their employees.”

“Employers may be potentially liable for a breach of duty owed to employees, either under existing laws or under those specifically enacted due to the pandemic itself,” he said.

Merrillville attorney Natalie Shrader, a partner with Burke Costanza & Carberry, said businesses can protect themselves from liability during a crisis by seeking legal guidance.

“When a crisis arises, there is sure to be instability and difficulty for business owners as they anxiously attempt to protect their employees, remain productive and navigate the changing landscape,” she said.





READ ON PHONE

Fluid situation

In the case of the CARES Act, changes were frequent.

Congress passed the legislation one late spring evening, and it was signed into law the next day. Legislation that complex would normally have taken weeks to get approval as the ramifications of each provision would be considered, but because it was emergency assistance prompted by the pandemic, the bureaucrats were left to work out the kinks and set up procedures afterward, said Merrillville attorney Chad Nally, a partner with Burke Costanza & Carberry.

The Small Business Administration was sending daily FAQ lists — frequently asked questions — as the agency worked to implement the policies required by the new law.

Businesses were eager for assistance, but they wanted to first find out whether loans would be forgiven, a detail that was uncertain early on because of the “vague, ambiguous terms,” Nally said.

Like most law firms, Nally’s firm deals with banks on a routine basis and that relationship helped, he said.

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act, like the CARES Act, was rushed into law.

“While this legislation provides a number of programs to help employees, businesses and people who have lost their jobs, these statutes also create liability for employers who fail to properly administer the employee-related programs,” Shrader said. “At the same time, business owners and human resource personnel have been working through the new Title VII and HIPPA scenarios raised by coronavirus concerns.”

Then there’s the common sense need to protect workers.

“Businesses are also now considering what it means to provide employees

with a workplace free of hazards during a pandemic,” Shrader said.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration requires employers to protect workers from exposure to hazardous chemicals used for cleaning and disinfecting, which are common in many sanitizers and sterilizers.

“The use of gloves and eye, face and respiratory protection may be required,” Jorgensen said. “When respirators are necessary, employers must implement a comprehensive respiratory protection program.”

Those who lived through the COVID-19 pandemic will long remember the masks and other personal protective equipment necessary to protect people from exposure to the deadly virus.

In recent months, employers dealt with social distancing, enhanced cleaning and disinfecting of the workplace and, in some cases, barred employees from the workplace

who were confirmed to have the virus, Jorgensen noted.



“If nothing else, the COVID-19 crisis is teaching us the importance of having an emergency preparedness plan.”

— Trent A. McCain
Attorney
McCain Law Offices



The new Crew Carwash in Valparaiso closed temporarily for the COVID-19 pandemic but has since reopened.

Photo by Doug Ross

In addition to OSHA, the Americans With Disabilities Act applies to a pandemic. Employers could ask workers if they were experiencing symptoms

of the virus, but they couldn’t specifically ask if they had it, Jorgensen said.

“Employers normally cannot check employees’ temperatures under the ADA. However, because the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and state/local health authorities have acknowledged community spread of COVID-19, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has stated that employers may check employees’ temperatures,” Jorgensen said, but in a nondiscriminatory manner and with noninvasive equipment. Also, any information recorded as a medical test is subject to confidentiality requirements and could not be documented in personnel files.

ADA confidentiality means employers should not disclose the identity of employees diagnosed with, or suspected of having, the virus, Jorgensen said. Employers should, however, send a communication to employees reporting that there was a confirmed case among a co-worker, urging employees to be careful in observing symptoms and directing employees to avoid the office and seek medical attention if symptoms occur.

“By enabling their businesses to take measured approaches in protecting the

health and well-being of workforces, mitigating organization and operational risks and exposure to liabilities and vulnerabilities, and shoring financial



The Occupational Safety and Health Administration requires employers to protect workers from exposure to hazardous chemicals used for cleaning and disinfecting, which are common in many sanitizers and sterilizers.

stability in a volatile environment, they can exercise flexibility in a universe that is witnessing broad and unique availability of emergency credit,” Duthie said.

Plan ahead

McCain said it is impossible to plan for every contingency.

“Some things you can’t imagine happening in a million years,” McCain said. “But for those who have a plan, it will give them some comfort and confidence when they’re facing down an emergency or crisis.”

Duthie said he encourages management teams to take an “outside-in view” of the company, “assessing risks and vulnerabilities to the organization threatened by external factors both within and without the company’s control.”

He suggests clients develop answers to a series of questions, including these:

- Are there areas of the business that can be labeled mission critical, that if disturbed would result in a devastating impact

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to employees and the financial viability of the organization? Can any of these be performed remotely? Does remote work threaten the company's cybersecurity?

- Are there physical changes in the workplace required or requested by federal, state or local agencies to remain operational?
- Have workplace and human resources policies for available leave been reviewed and updated? What leave is available to employees during an emergency? Is there a communication plan for emergencies?
- Does the company have insurance policies in place with coverage available for business interruption or catastrophic events? Have these policies been reviewed, and is the coverage sufficient for up to six months loss of operations resulting from a shutdown? What are the insurance carrier's notice requirements to trigger coverage?
- Does the company have a strong relationship with a lender or source of available credit? Has the company reviewed requirements for obtaining additional credit in an emergency?

"During a crisis, employers must also protect their employees' physical and mental well-being," Shrader said. "As a baseline, employers do this by obeying all relevant laws pertaining to employee protection."

During the pandemic, employers provided employees with necessary personal protective equipment, hand-washing stations, sanitizer and, in some cases, the ability to work from home to safeguard employees, Shrader said.

Obviously, employers must follow applicable laws. But they should go beyond that, she said.

"Employers should be empathetic to their employees during a crisis," Shrader said. "Employees are also worried about their jobs, health and families. Each employee approaches these concerns in a different manner."

Listen to employees' concerns and ask them what they need to be productive, and make reasonable accommodations



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“Employers should be empathetic to their employees during a crisis. Employees are also worried about their jobs, health and families. Each employee approaches these concerns in a different manner.”

—Natalie Shrader
Attorney
Burke Costanza & Carberry



where possible, Shrader said. An employee assistance program in their benefits package should also be considered so workers have access to needed support programs.

Flexibility essential

The Family and Medical Leave Act comes into play two ways during a pandemic, Jorgensen said. Employers with fewer than 500 employees, and government employers, must provide 12 weeks of family and medical leave to employees who have worked for at least 30 days and are unable to work — either at the workplace or remotely — because they need to care for their child whose

school has been closed or an alternative child-care provider is unavailable because of the virus, Jorgensen said.

The first 10 days of the leave may be unpaid, although employees can take paid time off if their employers' policies allow it. When they return, employers are required to restore employees to their same or equivalent position.

Employees who refuse to come to work out of fear of contracting the virus likely would not qualify for FMLA leave, Jorgensen said.

During the COVID-19 crisis, many businesses were forced to shut down to reduce exposure to the virus. Many employers instituted furloughs.

“While the employee is on furlough, he is still an employee and may continue to receive employee benefits depending on the benefit plan and employee handbook provisions. But not performing work for the employer means the employee isn't being paid, Shrader said.

A pandemic is, of course, not the only potential threat a business faces.

What happens if a key employee becomes seriously ill, dies, leaves for employment elsewhere or is caught embezzling?

Businesses of a certain size should have “key person insurance,” McCain said. “Such insurance is needed if the executive's death or inability to work would be devastating to the future of the company.” In the case of a mom-and-pop business, the key person may be the owner and founder and, in many cases, is the only person capable of running the business. In that case, the company itself is the beneficiary.

Comprehensive business insurance is protection from embezzlement, fraud and other inside criminal activity.

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Contingency planning

It's also important for business owners to develop a succession plan, experts said.

"We don't see that often enough," McCain said. "No one likes to think about their own mortality, but as a responsible business owner, you have to think about the life of your business after you've come and gone."

"Just like we parents know, we're not going to be around forever, (but) it is our job as parents to equip our children with tools they need to be self-sufficient," McCain said.

"As a business owner, it's the same thing (because) you birthed the idea into a business, you've cultivated the business and grown it (but also must) plan for what it will look like without you."

Aspiring entrepreneurs know business plans are essential for starting a business and raising capital, the experts said. But that's not all they're for.

"One thing that is not emphasized as much as it should be is an exit strategy," McCain said. "For aspirants, all of their focus is getting into business and being successful, and they give little to no thought on 'how do I get out if I need to?'"

Economic downturns often come with little warning.

"But others, such as the slow gravitation from traditional taxi cabs to ride-sharing apps, have a longer germination period," McCain said. "As a business owner, you cannot bury your head in the sand or say that you'll cross that bridge when you come to it (because) you have to observe changing trends."

"Going back to the restaurant example, if your competitors are delivering, you'd better be delivering, (because) if your competitors have an app where customers can receive rewards or pay in advance on the app, then you'd better be offering the same," he said.

McCain said it's likely some businesses won't survive the COVID-19 crisis.

"For those that do, however, each day they should write down some lessons learned for the future," he said. "It's too late to make bullets on the battlefield."

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MORE JOBS, INCREASED DEMAND FOR SERVICES
BEHIND HEALTH CARE SECTOR BUILDING BOOM

CARRIE NAPOLEON

Consistent growth in the health care industry remains a bright spot in Northwest Indiana's economy.

Since the Great Recession, health care is one of two sectors of industry that has been performing well in the Region, said Micah Pollak, associate professor of economics in the school of business at Indiana University Northwest. The other is the lower-paying retail sector, including food service.

From 2015 to 2019, health care and social assistance was the fastest-growing sector in Northwest Indiana in terms of employment. It created 2,654 new jobs or about half of all new jobs added in the Region during that time, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

"It is also a sector that pays really well," Pollak said. The average income for those jobs was \$50,000, which is better pay than the retail and food service jobs created.

Within the health care sector, ambulatory services were the fastest-single-growing industry, creating about a quarter of all new jobs in Northwest Indiana during that four-year span. Ambulatory health care services include facilities such as labs, diagnostic centers, doctor and

dentist offices, urgent care centers and other facilities that do not provide overnight stays.

Building boom

For many years, health care services meant a doctor's office visit or a trip to the hospital to obtain necessary services such as blood draws, diagnostics and procedures, Pollak said. The development of urgent care centers gives consumers the option to have minor issues treated without a visit to the emergency room. Urgent care centers also serve as doctor's offices when waits for immediate needs like a flu visit are days long or services are needed after hours.

According to the Northwest Indiana 2019 State of the Market Report compiled by the Bradley Co., which provides real estate market analysis, the health care industry continues to play a vital role in the Northwest Indiana office market.

Health systems such as Franciscan Alliance, Community Healthcare System, Methodist Hospitals and La Porte Health, among others, are behind the growth with renovations to existing facilities, new

construction and specialty facilities. The construction of a 115,000-square-foot specialized stroke and rehabilitation hospital in Crown Point, as well as an



"The goal is to let patients have access to the care they need at the appropriate level."

— Ashley Dickinson
CEO of La Porte and
Starke hospitals



Construction of Franciscan Alliance's new hospital Franciscan Health Michigan City was completed in 2019.

increase in assisted living and nursing facilities, will spur further growth in the sector.

The development will cause a ripple effect within other health care-related companies throughout the Region.

"In addition, expect to see medical office users compete for space proximal to these new developments," the Bradley report stated.

Construction throughout the Region reflects that growth. Urgent care centers and medical office centers have been popping up in communities throughout the Region, offering convenience and cost-effective care.



Photo provided by Franciscan Health

Franciscan Alliance has made urgent care inroads in many communities with facilities in Crown Point, Michigan City, Munster, Portage and Valparaiso. Its newest facilities opened last year in St. John and Hobart.

In July 2016, Methodist Hospitals opened the system's first urgent care facility, Methodist CareFirst in Crown Point, in the city's Sportsplex complex. The facility focuses on sports-related injuries but serves all urgent care needs. Community Healthcare System opened its first urgent care with Community Immediate Care Munster in January 2019.

"The goal is to let patients have access to the care they need at the appropriate level," said Ashley Dickinson, CEO of La Porte and Starke hospitals.

A new primary care/urgent care facility is slated to open in May at NewPorte Landing in La Porte. A new medical office building attached to the new La Porte Hospital is scheduled to open mid-2021. In 2019, physician offices and an urgent care were added during renovations to LifeWorks in Michigan City.

Pollak, the economist, said new hospital construction also represents part of the building boom, but not necessarily an increase in jobs. Ambulatory centers

are boosting the Region's job count. About 687 new jobs added in Lake County were attributed to hospitals. Residential care facilities added another 245 jobs since 2015. Ambulatory care centers represented 1,784 new jobs in the four-year span.

Several factors are driving the building booms. As baby boomers age, the need for facilities like doctor's offices and diagnostic centers increases. "We have a very older demographic," Pollak said.

The Region, due in part to its location just outside a major metropolitan area like Chicago, is stable and even growing a little bit, he said.

Hospitals for new era

Dickinson said her system is on pace to complete construction of a new replacement hospital in La Porte later this year. The facility is two blocks west of the existing 50-year-old site, and will provide consumers and medical professionals with a state-of-the-art hospital. The construction reflects how health care has changed over the years.

"Really, when this hospital was built, it was very much built toward in-patient focus," Dickinson said. Today much more of health care is moving to an outpatient model, she said. Patients who in the past would be spending days in the hospital for a joint replacement procedure often now go home the same day.

"It's just how health care has evolved," Dickinson said. "We have designed the new facility to be very patient-centric."

Lab areas for blood draws and testing in the new hospital will be easily accessible from a central location near the entrances. The existing facility requires people to walk a maze of corridors to find the labs' tucked-away location.



LA PORTE HOSPITAL

► Construction is underway on the new \$125 million replacement La Porte Hospital, which is expected to be complete in 2021. (Rendering provided by La Porte Hospital)

The system has numerous projects in the pipeline to meet consumer demand and the changing face of health care. A long-range plan for the facility is in place.

"We have our sights set on some new markets," Dickinson said.

Dickinson said shifts in population, particularly with people moving into Northwest Indiana from other areas, is helping to fuel the system's growth plans. The system also wants to ensure

it is prepared for the portions of the population that are aging and may need more care.

"I think it is going to be a more convenient system for them," she said. "It really goes back to the way we designed it."

Dickinson said her system wants patients to have improved access to medical services.

"Really our focus is to make it more convenient," Dickinson said.

Franciscan Alliance also has seen its stake in the Region's health care marketplace rise. Franciscan Health Michigan City hospital opened in January 2019.

In February, Franciscan Health dedicated the new location for the Franciscan Physician Network Crown Point Pediatric Health Center.

The \$3 million replacement facility opened next to the Franciscan Health St. Clare Health Clinic Crown Point on Indiana Avenue. The new facility has 10,250 square feet with 18 exam rooms and child-friendly finishes. It is 3,750 square feet larger than the former location.

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Work continues at the new Franciscan Beacon Hospital in La Porte, which is expected to open this year. The \$21.6 million facility is the result of a 2018 partnership between Franciscan Health and Beacon Health. Work will increase the size of the existing facility from 900 square feet to 28,000 square feet. The hospital will feature a full-service 10-bed emergency department, eight inpatient beds, laboratory services, telehealth connectivity and state-of-the-art imaging and diagnostic equipment.

Methodist Hospitals in 2017 completed a \$12.1 million investment at the Northlake Campus in Gary that included the renovation of the emergency room and an existing intensive care unit to create a surgical/trauma ICU. The investment was part of \$18 million in renovations to its facilities.

Community Healthcare System opened its new \$40 million Stroke and Rehabilitation Center on Broadway Avenue in Crown Point in 2019. The four-story facility is a 129,000-square-foot multispecialty center that features inpatient rehabilitation treatment along with physician practices, outpatient services and immediate care for family health and wellness.

Daniel McCormick, Franciscan Health Crown Point CEO and president, said, as the system develops a plan for caring for patients, it is important to help them access the correct location for their care. A hospital setting will always be the place to go for hyperacute services. Retrofitting old hospitals to function efficiently in providing these services is both costly and difficult.

“These harsh realities have brought us to the realization that South Lake County requires significant investment in the acute care infrastructure to reset itself for the care of patients into the future,” McCormick said.

Franciscan Health is planning a new Crown Point campus for 2023 that will be built to maximize patient access and care delivery in a modern, technology-driven environment, McCormick said. The facility is planned for the southeast corner of Interstate 65 and U.S. 231 and will join the existing Franciscan Health Franciscan Point and University of St. Francis facilities.

A groundbreaking has not yet been scheduled.

McCormick said the location will make the site a regional medical center better suited for south Lake County and nearby areas in Porter, Newton and Jasper counties. As part of the project, the USF campus will be doubled and Franciscan Point’s ortho ambulatory surgery center will be expanded.

“Beyond a new campus, look for Franciscan to develop multiple sites for primary, urgent and specialty care connected through technology so we can best communicate to patients and each other,” he said.

“This planned investment in Northwest Indiana is a testament to our confidence in the future growth of this area,” McCormick said.



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PNW

Remote working simplified

Experts say technological advancements have eased process to be productive outside office



Technology professionals say companies that don't adopt telework tools and policies risk losing talent or even business especially in the wake of a global pandemic.

LAUREN CAGGIANO

In many ways, technology has changed the way we do business in the 21st century. It's streamlined processes and connected people in ways that weren't possible even 20 years ago.

Technology plays an integral role in almost all professions today, especially in office environments, experts say. Remote work setups make technology imperative to keeping pace with the speed of business.

Statistics from the 2018 American Community Survey estimate about 5 million people, or roughly 3.6% of the U.S. workforce, work from home at least half the time. The number of telecommuting employees has grown

by 173% since 2005, and the number of employers offering a work-from-home option has grown by 40% during the past five years.

Technology professionals say companies that don't adopt telework tools and policies risk losing talent or even business especially in the wake of a global pandemic. That said, not all tools are created equal, and the ways in which employees deploy them matters.

But experts say companies that permitted remote working were ahead of the curve and prepared to deal with the impact of stay-at-home orders during the crisis. Firms that weren't, however, sought expertise to quickly adapt to the situation.

The basics

Cary Smith, president of Midwest Telecom of America, said having the right tools is key.

"Good Wi-Fi equipment allows you to move throughout your remote environment while maintaining good internet connectivity to your mobile devices, like laptop PC, mobile smartphones or tablets," he said.

On the software side, Smith recommends decision makers set their colleagues up with reliable collaborative programs that facilitate communication and connection with team members, coworkers, as well as prospects, vendors and existing clients in real time with automated historical storage of all events.



READ ON PHONE

Speaking of connectivity, Smith said it's not enough to make databases like customer relationship management systems and ERP (enterprise resource planning) systems accessible. The real test is if they work in remote contexts and at the speed the business world demands.

"Of course, all of these systems must allow you to update and fully interact with them while working remotely on a real-time basis," he said.

Use of these tools does not come without its risks. That's why Smith recommends secure encrypted (256-bit encryption) VPN (virtual private network) connection over the internet back to company servers housing necessary systems. Additionally, he advises clients to invest in a firewall appliance like Fortinet, which in his words, "receives constant anti-intrusion, anti-virus/malware updates on a real-time basis on the edge of your remote network."

Jeff Cobb, regional vice president of Comcast Business, said companies stand to benefit from embracing cloud computing.

"To stay productive, employees need virtual access to the same information and tools they'd be able to access in a physical office," he said. "The obvious solution here is the cloud, which hosts files, data and applications within a centralized server and makes them accessible from any device with connectivity."

Cobb said this setup allows people to work from anywhere on company-issued mobile devices or even on their own devices.

Many technology providers offer cloud solutions apps and software as a service (SaaS), in which software lives in the cloud, not on an individual's computer, he added.

Cobb said remote working doesn't require sophisticated technology but should be reliable. For example, a phone system should be easy to use both on site and remotely, he said.

Working in the cloud

Collaboration tools are another means to that end.

"When all employees are in the same office, it's easy to get together in a conference room or someone's office to exchange ideas and present information — but when one employee, or everyone, is remote, it's not as easy to do," he said. "That means collaboration platforms and unified communications systems are key for future workplaces."

Another tool — group chat software — can make it seem like everyone is in the same room, even if employees are in various locations or working remotely from home. Google or Microsoft Office both offer collaboration apps for chatting remotely and sharing files.

These tools, however, are only as good as the environment in which they're integrated. To that end, Cobb said it's critical that employers grant virtual access to everything.

"Employees need access to more than a few applications or files," he said. "Businesses deploying a cloud strategy must provide employees with ways to share information, sync schedules, process important documents, and back everything up in real time — securely."

Cobb said neglecting cybersecurity measures can be costly. Employers should take care that their talent understands how to keep their devices (and by extension, the company's network) safe by avoiding unsecured websites, using virus protection, and refraining from downloading unapproved apps and software on company devices. Mistakes happen, but according to Cobb,

it's imperative that there's a universal standard and code of conduct.

All employees — especially those who work remotely — should be obliged to follow key cybersecurity guidelines, which a business should document and IT should support. Cobb recommends tactics that include securing their work phone and computer, installing a firewall, downloading anti-virus and anti-malware software that is set to update automatically and regularly back up information.

Chris Kotul, division manager with Chester Inc.'s informational technologies arm in Valparaiso, is no stranger to helping people adjust to remote work setups. He said Microsoft 365 is a comprehensive solution that caters to the demands of a remote team.

"With all the data in Office 365, I really don't think that there's a better option out there right now," he said. "Microsoft has done a great job of building a product to really meet the needs of all businesses."

WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY

"To stay productive, employees need virtual access to the same information and tools they'd be able to access in a physical office."

— Jeff Cobb
Regional vice president
Comcast Business



"I think the most important thing we have to look at going forward for our homes is the proper security there. ... A lot of us don't lock it down."

— Chip Miceli
CEO, Pulse Technologies



For instance, the solution Microsoft Teams has the power to connect teams, no matter their location. Users have access to messaging and audio/video chat. It also allows for real-time document collaboration, which cuts down



Photo by Michelle Hamstra

Cary Smith, president of Midwest Telecom of America, recommends secure encrypted (256-bit encryption) VPN (virtual private network) connection over the internet back to company servers housing necessary systems.

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on confusion and headaches that stem from working from multiple drafts.

While these solutions are convenient, Kotul said employers should exercise caution when facilitating remote work environments.

"A lot of employers really need to consider that, when you're allowing staff to connect from home, you could potentially be just extending everything that is running in their home into your office," Kotul said. "So, I think it's important to set up things like multi-factor authentication."

Ron Hulett, co-founder and project manager at U.S. Business Systems in Elkhart, said there's a wealth of security tools available on the market, including some that are free.

"I think the criteria for what you choose really comes down to the security level and the risk mitigation that you might have personally or as a corporation," Hulett said. "So, we've found some really simple tools to deploy that work well and that have security on both ends, (and) they have low cost of entry, which allows a small team of folks to get on board and not break the bank, so to speak and be able to remotely access

their devices, which is important in the wake of the pandemic.”

Hulett recommends remote workers use RemotePC software, which allows users to access their desktop from home. He said it’s simple but effective for productivity off site. “You load the tools on both machines — on your machine at home and on your machine at office, and it authenticates the two together,” he said. “So, there’s a level of security there, and it’s really simple to use.”

You can never be too careful, especially right now, Hulett said. Cyberattacks are on the rise in recent months in terms of both sophistication and frequency.

“So, the security tools are even more important if you’re handling data that needs that level of attention,” he said, noting the press around the popular video platform Zoom, and its alleged security gaps.

Rushed into change

Chip Miceli, CEO of Illinois-based Pulse Technologies, which has operations in Northwest Indiana, said when

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Statistics from the 2018 American Community Survey estimate roughly 3.6% of the U.S. workforce work from home at least half the time.

the pandemic hit the U.S. and companies shifted to telework, the transition wasn’t always done with care.

His company advised clients how to empower their staff to get the job done, with safety and security in mind.

Sometimes that meant addressing vulnerabilities in a remote work environment. For example, he encountered cases where employees took their work monitors home to hook up to their personal computers.

This goes against best practices, Miceli said.

Similarly, he said working from home underscores the need for firewalls and other security measures.

“I think the most important thing we have to look at going forward for our homes is the proper security there,” he said. “Most staff just plugged in

a computer and got on the internet and away we go, but a lot of us don’t lock it down.”

Miceli said some home offices his firm examined found firewalls were nonexistent, which required software installation. He said all industries are vulnerable when it comes to data transmission and exchange.

Many everyday communications contain sensitive information, which could be harmful to a business or individual if found in the wrong hands, Miceli said.

“Say you’re sitting at home, looking at your emails, (and) you don’t really think about the fact that you might need more protection than you already have,” he said. “So that’s one of the things we’ve been finding out — a lot of people just don’t have that at home.”



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ANNEMARIE MANNION

The year 2020 hasn't been easy for colleges, universities or students in Northwest Indiana. The COVID-19 pandemic suspended traditional campus activities in the spring, forcing the higher-learning community to adapt to a new normal.

As institutions quickly set plans to operate and educate students through remote learning, efforts never wavered on a future that included new leaders, a new state-of-the-art building for one school, and new academic programs and partnerships.

New leadership

Among the new leaders is Ken Iwama who was named chancellor of Indiana University Northwest in February. Before joining IUN, Iwama served as the founding vice president for economic development, continuing studies and government relations at the City University of New York, College of Staten Island.

He succeeded William Lowe, who stepped down as IUN chancellor after 10 years in the role.

At the College of Staten Island, Iwama oversaw educational programming for 4,000 precollege, professional certificate and matriculated students, as well as support for faculty research and innovation, government relations, corporate and foundation engagement, specialized student career services, student residential life, workforce development, auxiliary services and community-based centers and programming.



“Everybody needs to champion the value proposition of higher education.”

— Ken Iwama
Chancellor, Indiana University Northwest

Iwama said he was drawn to IUN because the Region's demographics were like those at the College of Staten Island.

He also found it appealing that the college was a destination for immigrant and first-generation college students. He said, when those students earn a degree, it can be life changing.

“I'm dedicated to advancing the social mobility of students,” he said.

Some areas he will focus on include advancing academic programs, enrolling new students and helping existing students stay on course to achieve their degrees in a timely manner.

He expects all staff will assist in these efforts.

“Enrollment is everyone's job,” Iwama said. “We're all ambassadors speaking to the value of higher education.”

Amid the impact of COVID-19 and other challenges, he said the rewards of higher education are needed now more than ever.

“Everybody needs to champion the value proposition of higher education,” he said. “I also want to advance academic programs and new programs to meet changing needs.”

Building strong community ties is another goal that can bring investment and resources to IUN.

“There is a great dynamic that happens when the

power of an academic institution meets the excitement and enthusiasm of the community,” said Iwama, who has met with students, faculty, staff and alumni, and was impressed with their support of the university.

St. Mary's College in Notre Dame also named a new leader in February. Katie Conboy was named the school's 14th president.



Purdue University Northwest plans to offer a new academic degree program this fall. The criminal justice degree program is pending the approval of the Indiana Commission of Higher Education.



IN TRANSITION

OF LEARNING WHETHER IN-PERSON OR ONLINE



Photo provided by Purdue University Northwest

Conboy was provost and senior vice president at Simmons University, a women's college in Boston.

Conboy said she wants to continue the mission of providing undergraduate women with a strong, liberal arts education and the opportunity to advance their education in a growing number of co-educational graduate programs. St. Mary's has introduced several new graduate programs, including speech language pathology, data science and nursing practice in 2015 and a master's degree in autism studies in 2019.

"I am so excited to become part of a college that shares so many of my values and priorities: educating the whole person, promoting an open-hearted and inclusive community and advancing women," Conboy said in a statement.

Mona Bowe, vice president for enrollment management at St. Mary's, said Conboy is a good fit for the college.

"She has spent a lot of time in her career empowering women and working in a Catholic environment," Bowe said. "She is absolutely comfortable in the kind of education that St. Mary's is expert in."

Last year, applications to St. Mary's were up 15%, and enrollment has remained steady at about 400 a class.

While students' college plans throughout the country are uncertain because of the pandemic, Bowe expects next year's class also to have about 400 students.

"We could always take more students that are a great match for us," Bowe said. "But we're comfortable with that number."

At Purdue University Northwest, Kenneth (Chris) Holford also is learning a new role. He recently was promoted to provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs from dean of the PNW College of Engineering and Sciences and a professor of biology.

The crisis might have changed the way education is delivered, but Holford is focused on the future and has his sights set on developing and expanding academic programs important to the needs of Northwest Indiana.

"I believe there are some opportunities for us to have an impact with programs that are economically or socially important to the Region and where the faculty at Purdue Northwest have significant expertise," Holford said.

He said PNW already offers a doctorate in nursing practice, and there may be other avenues for growth.

"But there is also opportunity for us to expand into the clinical mental health areas," he said. "Likewise, given the nature of industry in the metropolitan area, I believe that applied doctoral programs in areas like engineering and technology would be natural extensions of our existing graduate programs."

A new normal

University leaders say they will operate under a new normal as the world changes in the wake of the pandemic. Colleges, much like the business world, turned to remote learning and used other online tools to continue educating students, processes that could remain in place moving forward.

"We went through transitioning our classes to virtual delivery and that went well," said Lora Plank, vice chairperson of academic affairs and dean of health sciences at Ivy Tech Community College's Valparaiso campus.

Some classes, such as labs that require hands-on work, were harder to adapt. But faculty members made them work.

Plank cited an Ivy Tech associate professor who used Zoom classes to teach pharmacy-tech students hands-on skills, including counting pills.

"She used items you could find around your home to teach them about counting



Photo provided by Ivy Tech

Jodi Wilkes, assistant professor in the Ivy Tech Health Care Specialist program, uses creativity to engage students in virtual labs.

pills and make sure you have the right number in a bottle,” she said.

It’s unlikely in-person classes will ever disappear, but Plank said she expects more online streaming of classes in the future.

“I think people are finding that ‘Hey. Streaming is a good option.’ Many options come from having a challenging problem (such as the pandemic),” Plank said.

She said Ivy Tech will continue seeking ways to effectively teach classes, which suit students’ various needs.

“We offer diverse opportunities so everybody can take a class in a way that best works for them,” she said.

Effective partnerships

A cooperative effort is reviving the campus of Saint Joseph’s College in Rensselaer, which suspended operations in 2017 because of financial problems and declining enrollment.

The school partnered with peer institutions to create academic programs. One partner is the Lafayette campus

of Ivy Tech, which brought students and classes back to the school.

“When people hear there’s life back (at Saint Joseph’s College), they get very excited about it,” said Beth Graf, director of communications and development at Saint Joseph’s.

The college’s plan is to create one academic center for degree programs and another for nondegree programs.

Ivy Tech launched its first class, an English composition class, in January. It’s planning another class, Entrepreneurship 101, this summer.

In about a year, Patricia Plantenga, site manager for Ivy Tech’s Monticello campus and academic adviser, expects there to be between 20 and 30 courses offered at Saint Joseph’s.

Ivy Tech’s classes will focus on business, agriculture, education and liberal arts. Entrepreneurship was chosen as one of the first classes to be offered. Community leaders saw too many young business owners struggling and sought local resources, which could provide expertise and guidance.



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"They were noticing young couples starting businesses and not being able to survive very long," Plantenga said.

The Jasper County Rural Electric Membership Corporation, the Jasper County Community Foundation and the Jasper County Economic Development Commission are collaborating to fund scholarships for students who take the class.

Degree programs will not be offered on the campus, but Plantenga is optimistic about the partnership.

"I'd like to think we'll just keep growing," she said. "That's the goal."

St. Joseph's also is offering nondegree professional certifications.

The state has approved the college to offer certified nursing assistant, certified clinical medical assistant, electrocardiogram and phlebotomy certifications.

Graf said certification classes are expected to begin in spring 2021.

In addition to an education center with classrooms, faculty offices, administrative offices and two lecture halls, the college has apartments where students can stay for weekend classes.

"Those are being offered for Saturday nights, so they don't have to drive if they don't want to," Graf said.

Fresh offerings

Purdue Northwest also has unveiled some changes to better serve students and meet the Region's job needs.

The university anticipates its new \$40 million Nils K. Nelson Bioscience Innovation Building will open this fall.

The 68,000-square-foot facility will be a shared space for the nursing and biological science programs and serve as a hub for research and advanced STEM opportunities in Northwest Indiana, PNW said.

The center will be a resource for students looking to enter the health care field, which is the No. 2 economic generator in the Region.

The building is the first new academic building on the Hammond campus since 1997, PNW said. The Indiana General Assembly allocated \$35.1 million for the project in April 2017, and the university has raised more than \$2 million for the project on its own.

Purdue Northwest also plans to offer a new academic degree program this fall. The criminal justice degree program is pending the approval of the Indiana Commission of Higher Education.

Lee Michael Johnson, professor and chair of behavioral sciences at PNW, said there are many career paths a student with the degree could follow,

including police officer, parole officer, youth worker or victim advocate.

Johnson said PNW offers criminal justice as a concentration within the sociology department.

A degree program will help students excel in an increasingly complex field that uses technology and addresses rising issues such as cybercrime, he said.



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EXPERTS SAY DOWNTIME OPPORTUNITY TO PLAN FOR EVENTUAL BOUNCE BACK

DOUG ROSS

For every economic downturn, there's a recovery, and experts say lulls are the best time to plan for the bounce back.

Staying at home doesn't mean standing still, experts said. Nor should it mean ending marketing efforts.

Jack Adams, CEO of Safari Marketing, used Gov. Eric Holcomb's stay-at-home order to reconsider what products and services to offer in the future.

His firm's clients include many restaurants and bars. The forced closure offered an opportunity to do facelifts and remodeling. Idled delivery vehicles finally became available for new vehicle wraps.

He knew that, when clients were able to get back to business as usual, they would be swamped again. They would be so busy with day-to-day operations that long-term planning would be difficult, Adams said.

"The downturn gives a great period of time to develop a strategy, research," said Seth Spencer, founder of SERA Solutions in Michigan City.

Cutting back on expenses when revenue shrinks or disappears shouldn't mean eliminating marketing.

"A lot of people are pumping the brakes on their marketing right now," Adams said while the stay-at-home order was in place. "Pumping the brakes is the worst thing they could do."

Michelle Andres, president of Group 7even in Valparaiso, said the key for a

business during a slow economy is to maintain market share, "which doesn't happen by going dark with advertising."

"If a business goes dark, they lose a lot of top-of-mind awareness," she said. "Once they lose that, they then start to lose footing within the market, and that is something very expensive to get back."

Andres said that, during the global pandemic, it wasn't business as usual.

"People (had) new challenges, new fears and new aspirations," she said. "So, business as usual (wasn't) going to cut it."

Andres said marketing teams need to be ready to toss out their marketing plans, postpone their scheduled blogs and social media posts, and pivot quickly and completely.

"The goal is not to stop advertising, but rather, the way you advertise needs to change," she said.

Mat Barbur, cofounder of True Mtn Marketing in St. John, said people will remember what brands did during the pandemic.

Andres said working with a local social influencer/blogger to get a conversation started about your business

could be effective in maintaining awareness.

"Again, the goal is to generate top-of-mind awareness, so get people talking about you however you have to," she said. "Create amazing promotions."

She said people struggled to maintain daily routines during the crisis, so it's important to provide optimism.

"Giving discounts to first responders or parents (who) are working from home



"If a business goes dark, they lose a lot of top-of-mind awareness. Once they lose that, they then start to lose footing within the market."

— Michelle Andres
President, Group 7even



El Salto Restaurant, which has six locations in Northwest Indiana, has changed up its Facebook marketing to promote carry-out and delivery options.

and having to help teach their kids is a great way to generate positive brand perception and shareable content at the same time,” Andres said. “And even better, it’s a way to show your customers

that you care about your community and neighbors.”

Barbur said, during a downturn, maintaining your brand’s voice and presence is important.

“I want the company to be real to who you are,” he said. “Brands have to talk to people. They have to get on a one-on-one level with a person.”

Andres said people need reminding that your company is operating even during a lull.

“Customer relationships are like any other relationship,” she said. “No one wants a fair-weather friend, and the same thing holds true with consumer/brand relationships. (So) if you disappear when things get bad, that communicates something whether you intend it to or not.”

Effective strategy

Spencer pointed to Starbucks as an example of a company that responded well during and after a crisis.

When the company was accused of racism after an incident at one of its stores, the CEO took to Twitter and

announced that what the store manager did was wrong and took responsibility for fixing the problem. The stores were all shut down for employees to undergo sensitivity training, one on one, and came back well from that crisis because of the way it was handled, Spencer said.

In an economic crisis, all businesses are affected, albeit in different ways.

Businesses must realize the difference between essential and nonessential marketing. The answer will vary by industry, Spencer said.

During the pandemic, with food and beverage businesses unable to allow customers to dine in, marketing should be directed toward carry-out and delivery services, Spencer said.

For a flooring business, “those sales are likely to come to a screeching stop,” Spencer said, so marketing should be postponed until it’s business as usual. Most likely customers postponed their flooring needs too, even though their carpets still needed replacing. It’s just a question of timing and affordability, Spencer said.

Business owners need to know whether their customers are affected by a crisis, Spencer said, which means “really being on top of who your customer is.”

Knowing your customer is key to marketing decisions and ultimate success.

See who’s on your website, who’s walking through your door, Spencer advised. Is your voice a good reflection of who you want to be as a company?

Barbur said not to chase millennials and their money if your regulars are baby boomers. Why chase other people instead of turning customers into more loyal ones and bringing their friends back into the store? he added.

“Who is my type of consumer that I need to be spending the most advertising bucks trying to get those people in?” Barbur said.

Julie Olthoff, president of VIA Marketing in Merrillville, prefers dividing communications into target audiences.”

“Broadly speaking, you have previous and current customers and then prospects,” she said.

Barbur said businesses should be attentive to their core customers because they’ll be your brand ambassadors.

"You're trying to get these people to evangelize," Barbur said.

That's especially true when emerging from a recession, a pandemic-forced lull or other crisis.

When the dollars start flowing again, it will be time to cast a narrower net rather than a wider net with marketing efforts, Barbur said.

For businesses that are struggling financially and absolutely can't afford to continue traditional marketing, take advantage of your network and think outside the box, Andres advised.

"For example, keep putting out social content and ask your followers to share what you put out," Andres said. "Your loyal customers are your greatest fans. When asked for help, they will rise to the occasion."

Spencer said it's important to make informed decisions when it comes to developing marketing strategy. That means letting data drive decisions.

That's one of the reasons Spencer prefers digital advertising, where it's easy to track results. "Who's filling out your forms? Where are they coming from?" he said.

But traditional media's effectiveness can be tracked easily, too. Magazines, billboards or radio, for example, generate a custom URL that creates a website specific to that medium, Spencer said. It's inexpensive to create a custom URL, and that generates the numbers an advertiser wants to see to gauge effectiveness, he said. Promotional codes work, too.

"You can see where every one of your dollars is going," Spencer said.

When coming out of a slump, most businesses will need to pump up their cash flow.

"We will need to creatively think of offers or added-value perks to turn the faucet back on," Olthoff said. "For B2B, maybe a pre-pay discount. For retail, maybe get more for your purchase."

Be ready for recovery

An emotional appeal to customers is appropriate, too.

"We can't wait to see you," is a smart message, Spencer said.

Thank your customers and let them know you'll be a community partner going forward, he said.

"I want the company to be real to who you are. Brands have to talk to people. They have to get on a one-on-one level with a person."

— Mat Barbur
Cofounder, True Mtn Marketing in St. John



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A Valparaiso restaurant whose owner was worried about having to close the doors was honest with its customers, and hundreds of shares on social media later, it was able to remain afloat, Spencer said.

Coming out of the pandemic is different from a recession. “I don’t think we will be immediately comfortable being close to each other, so messages about cleanliness will still be important,” Olthoff said.

The focus after a shutdown is on getting the product or service to the consumer as quickly as possible, Spencer said, so expert advice on marketing is needed for quick recommendations.

An honest agency or expert will listen to a business owner’s story and say whether it’s worth the customer’s time or money to hire the expert, Spencer said.

“Odds are you’ll save money by working with an expert,” Spencer said. “Agencies will have a lot more insight into what works and what doesn’t work.”

“For current customers, e-blasts would be immediate, and I’m still a fan of reminder postcards,” she said. “For both audiences, hosting an open house/event, signs in front of your business, social media activity, digital ads, traditional media, etc.,” will be appropriate, Olthoff said.

“The rule still stands that you should never do just one media. It’s a committed mix over time,” Olthoff said. “It takes six weeks for a good digital run to take hold. On average, it takes 13 weeks for traditional media to deliver.”

Barbur said as a recovery begins, people will crave the social media equivalent of comfort food.

“I think right now people are searching for that feeling of comfort,” Barbur said.

They’ll go to Facebook — “it’s where their friends and family are” — to share stories about how they survived the crisis and see how their friends and family fared.

Over time, perhaps, they’ll drift back to the platforms that were starting to catch their attention before the crisis. Older people were drifting toward LinkedIn, which is business-oriented, and younger people toward TikTok, a video-sharing service, Spencer said. Streaming services are gaining traction, too.

“We’re seeing a lot of attention being paid to these platforms,” Spencer said. “I’m most curious what’s going to be popular on these streaming platforms.”

Whatever the medium, the important thing is to remain in touch.

Andres said at the end of the day, stopping your marketing when the economy is struggling positions you as a long-lost friend of your customer.

“They may have really like you and even have really fond memories, but they will move on and expand their network,” Andres said.

“If you continue to communicate with your customers, you become that friend everyone wants to have — the one that you can’t wait to see and no matter how long it has been, you pick up right where you left off.”

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LEADER PROFILE

Disney adventure of a lifetime

Theme park visit began Hammond native's journey to becoming CEO of The Walt Disney Co.



Hammond native Bob Chapek, right, replaced Robert Iger as CEO of The Walt Disney Co.

Photo provided by Disney Enterprises Inc.

LARRY AVILA

Feb. 25, 2020, is a date Bob Chapek likely won't soon forget.

That's when global media and entertainment giant The Walt Disney Co. announced the Hammond native would take over as its CEO.

He replaced Robert Iger, the executive who directed Disney's long-running success, including record-breaking box office movies from Marvel Studios and the Star Wars franchise.

Iger, who served as Disney CEO since 2005, will remain with the company as

executive chairman, leading its board of directors and creative endeavors through the end of his contract on Dec. 31, 2021, according to the company.

Chapek is appreciative of continuing to work with Iger as he transitions to his new role.

"Bob Iger has built Disney into the most admired and successful media and entertainment company, and I have been lucky to enjoy a front-row seat as a member of his leadership team," Chapek said the day his appointment was announced.

"Everything (The Walt Disney Co. has) achieved thus far serves as a solid foundation for further creative storytelling, bold innovation and thoughtful risk taking."

Chapek said his affinity for Disney began when he was a child during vacations to Walt Disney World in Florida with his family.

"My sister and I were the first in our family to go to college, and (becoming CEO of The Walt Disney Co.) was not even a distant dream," Chapek said. "My parents took us to Walt Disney World



a number of times, which is how I first fell in love with our parks.”

Looking back on his childhood visits to Disney World, he said he knows the impression the theme park can leave on someone. Just recognizing characters like Mickey Mouse and visiting sites such as Cinderella’s castle can have a powerful effect.

“It’s one of the reasons it’s such an honor and privilege to lead this company and help create stories and experiences that can change people’s lives,” Chapek said.

Chapek has worked for the Disney company almost 30 years. He earned a bachelor’s degree in microbiology from Indiana University and a master’s degree in business administration from Michigan State University.

He most recently served as chairman of Disney Parks, Experiences and Products. Chapek oversaw Disney’s largest revenue-generating segment, which experienced 18% growth between 2016 and 2019, and brought in \$26.2 billion in revenue for Disney during its 2019 fiscal year.

Chapek said, growing up in the Midwest, specifically the Region, shaped his values and ultimately the decisions he made throughout his life and career.

“Like most people, the experiences I had and the values I was taught as a child have had a tremendous influence on my life,” he said. “Hard work, integrity and optimism were important in my family, and I think, have been critical to my career.”

Those also are characteristics he seeks in people.

“I also learned early on the importance of family and community, which is why, although I have a demanding schedule, my family comes first.”

Chapek has family in the Region and returns for visits when time allows. He and his wife, Cynthia, have three grown daughters and three grandchildren.

The Disney Co.’s board said it was actively working on a succession plan for years and unanimously elected Chapek because of his “proven ability to deliver strong results across a wide array of businesses, and his tremendous

understanding of the breadth and depth of the company and appreciation for the special connection between Disney and its consumers.”

Sheila Matias, executive director of The Leadership Institute at Purdue University Northwest, said leaders are learners.

In Chapek’s case, spending almost three decades in assorted roles with Disney before his promotion provided him ample opportunity to learn the business. He’s also collaborated with leaders from other organizations, serving on the board of directors of Make-A-Wish America since 2018.

“A person who is willing to do the work can become a good leader,” Matias said. “I’m a believer that leaders are made, not born; they are the result of an openness to learn from others and from experience.”

Chapek said the Region and Indiana always will be a part of him.

“Everyone gets a certain feeling when they think about where they grew up, and I’m fortunate that my memories are so positive,” he said.



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BUSINESS PROFILE

Delivering ahead of curve



Osceola-based DineIn approaches three decades of bringing food to clients in Elkhart area

MICHAEL PUENTE

When the COVID-19 pandemic led to restaurant closures to slow the spread of the virus, those homebound turned to delivery services to keep food on their tables.

With almost three decades of experience, Osceola-based DineIn was up for the challenge. Some restaurant owners turned to DoorDash or Uber Eats to get their meals to customers to help them stay open. But DineIn also saw an uptick in orders and played a role in helping local restaurants stay in business.

DineIn launched in 1993, under the late Larry Laperriere, to plenty of skepticism, Railton said.

The idea of a service delivering meals from mom-and-pop restaurants was entirely new and needed time to build a following. But the new service meant restaurants could reach out to customers without sacrificing any of the in-store operations, Railton said.

“Any pioneer in any industry, especially when you’re starting something new, is going to have naysayers,” Railton said. “I think that’s the problem DineIn solved, (because) all restaurants have to do is do what they do best, make food. ... There’s really no risk (to the restaurant).”

Railton began as a DineIn driver in 1998 and worked his way up through the company before taking “a brief hiatus” in 2012. He returned to buy the company in 2013 after Laperriere died.

Railton says DineIn’s business methods have remained consistent since its founding.

The company signs contracts with restaurants to deliver their food in St. Joseph and Elkhart counties and southwestern Michigan.

Uniformed DineIn drivers are trained to check orders in transparent containers; otherwise, restaurant workers must open container lids to prove to the drivers the food orders are correct.

Unlike the major meal delivery services, Railton says his company focuses on hiring the right drivers for the job, and they tend to stay much longer than at other services.

“We’re just basically trying to get a feel for the driver applicants’ desire to really do a good job,” Railton said.

In this second stint with DineIn, Railton instituted more technology to take orders from customers and work with restaurants. But strategic planning, a constant of good business, remains critical to DineIn’s success, he said.

While the restaurant food delivery side of DineIn’s business increased from the pandemic, its catering business has suffered. Places like Notre Dame University and other businesses are not catering lunches or events.

Grocery delivery was another avenue opened by Railton in 2016. DineIn has an exclusive delivery contract with Martin’s Super Markets, a chain of 21 grocery stores across northern Indiana and

southwestern Michigan.

“For me, the point was to also keep our drivers busy year-round,” Railton said. “When it’s springtime, we slow down a little bit when people want to go out more, (but) when it’s snowing, we’re going to be busy.”

Krista Wendt, director of marketing for Martin’s Super Markets, said Martin’s is “fortunate to have a partner like DineIn to ensure its customers’ needs are met.”

She said DineIn’s entire staff, from its delivery drivers to its dispatch personnel, have the same mindset as a Martin’s employee: customer service is their top priority.

“DineIn is always willing to go out of their way to serve a customer in need and have best-in-class processes in place to ensure groceries are delivered in a safe and efficient manner,” Wendt said.

“Any pioneer in any industry, especially when you’re starting something new, is going to have naysayers.”

— Joshua Railton
Owner of DineIn



Joshua Railton, owner of DineIn, stands next to Randy Coryn, a company delivery driver, during a recent holiday party.

Photo provided by DineIn

During the early weeks of the pandemic, Joshua Railton, owner of DineIn, said his company’s residential orders were up 22%.

“When you have the entire delivery areas staying home all day, every day, you’re just going to have an increase of people wanting to order in,” he said.

DINEIN

► The company signs contracts with restaurants to deliver their food in St. Joseph and Elkhart counties and southwestern Michigan.



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One meal at a time



Northwest Indiana Meals on Wheels doing part to keep food on tables of Region's homebound



A team of more than 600 volunteers at Meals on Wheels of NWI work together to assure that more than 1,700 meals are delivered daily.

Photo courtesy of Bella Photography

PHILP POTEPA

The concept for a program to deliver hot meals to the homes of those in need was born during a world crisis.

The earliest coordinated efforts for a Meals on Wheels program started in London during World War II after the devastating loss of the many sons and daughters who served as the vital support system for their older parents and grandparents. By 1954, the first Meals on Wheels program in America was launched in Philadelphia.

The Meals on Wheels organization in Lake County started in July 1977 as a service provided through the Lake County Visiting Nurse Association. Though Meals on Wheels programs

also existed in Illinois in neighboring Lansing and Calumet City, the original Crown Point-based program, which serves Northwest Indiana, remains the largest and most recognized for service.

"Meals on Wheels has never missed a beat in the past months, with our impact in the community even greater during the pandemic, with our volunteers, staff and donors as committed as ever," said Sandra Noe, the executive director of Meals on Wheels of NWI.

With kitchen and administrative headquarters based at 8446 Virginia St. in Merrillville, Meals on Wheels of NWI delivers meals to clients in Jasper, Lake, Porter and Newton counties. In October 2019, the organization delivered its milestone 8 millionth meal.

With a team of more than 600 volunteers, Meals on Wheels of NWI delivers more than 1,700 meals daily. Despite added concerns and extra safety precautions that began because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Noe and her team responded with preparedness and worked with staff and volunteers to assure no disruption of service.

Husband-and-wife volunteers Phil and Sharon Casbon of Valparaiso have been married for 56 years. For 25 of those years, they have delivered for Meals on Wheels of NWI. In the spring, for the first time in a quarter of a century, the couple opted to take a short "pause" from their delivery routes.

"We arranged to take the month of April off from delivery due to everything

that was unfolding early on with the virus,” Sharon Casbon said.

The Casbons, like all Meals on Wheels volunteers, are part of a carefully scheduled rotation. They usually deliver meals to clients one day a week, while also agreeing to be substitutes for other routes as needed. They said most routes have volunteers delivering six or seven meals, as well as some more “concentrated routes.” Those might include an apartment complex, resulting in as many as a dozen client meals to be delivered.

“There are some weeks when we help fill in for others, and then, we might deliver meals three or even as many as five days a week as we’re needed,” Phil Casbon said.

Phil and Sharon agree that, in addition to making new friends while volunteering, the added bonus is the reward of smiles and the comfort of knowing others are helped through the combined efforts of so many.

“For a good number of the clients on the Meals on Wheels service, seeing a volunteer on their doorstep bringing



Photo by Bella Photography

Sandra Noe, the executive director of Meals on Wheels of NWI, addresses patrons and staff in March during the 20th Anniversary Dine with the Chefs Gala.

them a nutritious meal can often be the only human contact they might have throughout the day or even throughout the week,” Sharon Casbon said.

In March, volunteers and patrons joined the staff of Meals on Wheels of NWI to gather at Avalon Manor in Merrillville for the 20th Anniversary

Dine with the Chefs Gala. The elegant six-course charity feast attracted 400 guests and raised more than \$90,000.

“We are incredibly grateful to our sponsors and volunteers who believe in us and support us,” said Jodi Bella, business development manager for Meals on Wheels of NWI.

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VIEWPOINT

Trust key to success as CEO

Effective leaders must set positive example for organizations and people they serve



READ ON PHONE



► **Leigh Morris** is a health care consultant and has served in numerous leadership roles across the Region during a three-decade plus career in health care, and is former mayor of the city of La Porte.

I've spent most of my working life serving as a chief executive officer, mostly in hospitals and health systems. I've enjoyed and appreciated the opportunities that role provided, especially the chance to develop or nurture a team

that makes a positive difference. I like challenges and finding ways to overcome obstacles. For me, it made the long hours and the pressures of the job less problematic. I like to think one of the best legacies for an effective CEO is to leave people and the organization better off than when he or she found them.

Despite my savoring the good things about being a CEO (or other organizational leader), there are some burdens, too. Being an organizational leader

is a demanding job.

Leading requires energy, effort and time. I believe that a CEO is always on duty and must never lose confidence, direction or composure. That's why they need physical and psychological stamina. CEOs need to have more energy and tenacity than most. A certain calmness in the face of adversity also does not hurt. Leadership takes and demands a lot. Effective leadership demands:

- Investing yourself in training and developing those around you.
- Being a constant example of someone of good character who is firmly grounded and with a reputation for high integrity.
- Taking time to connect, serve and build relationships with the people you're leading.

- Being a catalyst for change while consistently producing the desired results.
- Setting a positive example in virtually everything you do, every day.

There is another issue, too: CEOs need to keep personal beliefs and actions from undermining professional performance.

Gordon Hinckley, who was president of the Mormon Church for many years, said, "It is not wise, or even possible, to divorce private behavior from public leadership." While I agree with him, an effective leader needs to know how to keep those personal beliefs and actions in perspective, so they don't detract from the CEO's ability to set a positive example for the organization and its people.

Dr. Ronald Riggio, the Henry R. Kravis Professor of Leadership and Organizational Psychology at Claremont McKenna College, provided a prescription for effectiveness as a CEO:

1. Unify and don't divide.
2. Avoid creating divisions among their constituents.
3. Achieve results but limit collateral damage.
4. Make sure your personal effectiveness is not damaging to your team or is turning friends and followers into foes.

I'd add five more points to his list:

1. Strive to be recognized as the strongest advocate for the success of the organization.
2. Share credit for the organization's successes liberally but accept responsibility for its failures and shortfalls.
3. Be clear and realistic about your expectations. I never intended to ask my team members to do

something I wouldn't be willing to do myself.

4. Build awareness that the organization's human resources are its greatest assets.
5. Inspire the organization to "stretch" to reach its potential. Don't allow good to be the enemy of the best.

The formulae for success are clear.

Why, then, the high failure rate? In the book, "Why CEOs Fail," David L. Dotlich and Peter C. Cairo, suggest these factors:

- Arrogance — You think you're right, and everyone else is wrong.
- Melodrama — You need to be the center of attention.
- Volatility — You're subject to mood swings.
- Excessive caution — You're afraid to make decisions.
- Habitual distrust — You focus on the negatives.
- Aloofness — You're disengaged and disconnected.
- Mischievousness — You believe that rules are made to be broken.
- Eccentricity — You try to be different just for the sake of it.
- Passive resistance — What you say is not what you really believe.

- Perfectionism — You get the little things right and the big things wrong.
- Eagerness to please — You try to win the popularity contest.

One factor is the most essential for successful CEO performance: Trust.

I don't know who said it, but this is the best advice

you could give to anyone who aspires to be a CEO: "The trust you give is the trust you get." And it's that trust that underlies every aspect of the success of a CEO — and the organization he or she serves.

One of the best legacies for an effective CEO is to leave people and the organization better off than when he or she found them."

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